

Listing of Claims

1-4. (Cancelled)

5. (Re-presented – formerly dependent claim 5) ~~The drive or sensor element as claimed in claim 3~~ An electromechanical drive or sensor element having a layer structure, which comprises

having at least three piezoelectric ceramic layers,

an electrode layer which is arranged between two mutually facing surfaces of directly adjacent piezoelectric ceramic layers, and

an electrical connector for making electrical contact with the electrode layer,
in which case the connector is likewise arranged and is passed out between the two mutually facing surfaces of the piezoelectric ceramic layers in which a groove is provided in at least one of the two mutually facing surfaces of the piezoelectric ceramic layers and at least partially holds the electrical connector and at least two grooves, in which these grooves are arranged offset with respect to one another and with respect to a longitudinal axis of the drive or sensor element.

6. (Cancelled)

7. (Currently amended) The drive or sensor element as claimed in claim 4 ~~5~~ having piezoelectric ceramic layers composed of PZT material.

8. (Currently amended) The drive or sensor element as claimed in claim 4 ~~5~~ having piezoelectric ceramic layers composed of $\text{PbMg}_{0.308}\text{Nb}_{0.617}\text{Ti}_{0.075}\text{O}_3$.

9. (Currently amended) The drive or sensor element as claimed in claim 4 ~~5~~ having piezoelectric ceramic layers composed of a material having a Curie temperature of more than 400°C.

10. (Currently amended) The drive or sensor element as claimed in claim 4 ~~5~~ having electrode layers composed of a metallic material having a Curie temperature of more than 400°C.

11. (Currently amended) The drive or sensor element as claimed in claim 4 5 having electrode layers composed of bismuth-titanate.

12. (Cancelled)

13. (Cancelled)

14. (Withdrawn)

15. (Currently amended) A level limit switch having a drive and having a sensor element as claimed in claim 4 5.

16. (Previously amended) The level limit switch as claimed in claim 15, in which the sensor element is separated from the drive by a non-polarized ceramic layer.

17. (Currently amended) An acceleration sensor having a sensor element as claimed claim 4 5.

18. (Previously Added) The drive or sensor element of claim 9, having piezoelectric ceramic layers composed of a material selected from the group consisting of $\text{Na}_{0.5}\text{Bi}_{4.5}\text{Ti}_4\text{O}_{15}$ and $\text{Bi}_3\text{TiNbO}_9$.

19. (Cancelled)

20. (Cancelled)

21. (New) The drive or sensor element as claimed in claim 5, in which the connector is a wire which extends beyond the surfaces of the piezoelectric ceramic layers.

22. (New) The drive or sensor element as claims claim 21 which is in the form of a wire and is a wire having a rippled or zigzag structure.

23. (New) The drive or sensor element as claimed in claim 21 having connectors which are in the form of wires and are composed of a metallic material having high-temperature

stability at more than 250°C.

24. (New) The drive or sensor element as claimed in claim 21 having connectors which are in the form of wires and are composed of a material which contains at least one of silver, stainless steel, and a nickel alloy.

25. (New) The drive or sensor element of claim 21, having connectors which are in the form of wires and are composed of a material that contains at least one of silver, stainless steel, and a nickel alloy and has high temperature stability at more than 250°C.

REMARKS

A. Overview

In the April 11, 2003 Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-4, 7, 9-13, 15, and 17-20 and objected to claims 5, 6, 8 and 16. Claim 14 has been withdrawn. By this Amendment, Applicants have represented claim 5 in independent form, amended claims 7-11, 15, and 17, and cancelled claims 1-4, 6, 12, 13, 19, and 20, without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter. Further, new claims 21-25 have been added. As such, claims 5, 7-11, 15-18, and 21-25 are pending in the present application.

B. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the Examiner's indication that claims 5, 6, 8, and 16 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

With this Amendment, Applicants have rewritten (not amended) claim 5 in independent form. This reformatting is merely a cosmetic change to original claim 5 and does not narrow the original scope of claim 5. Applicants respectfully request allowance of claim 5.

Claims 7-11, 15, and 17 have been amended to depend from claim 5. Claim 16 remains dependent upon claim 15 and claim 18 remains dependent upon claim 9. Further, newly added claim 21-25 depend from claim 5. As such, claims 7-11, 15-18, and 21-25 depend from claim 5. Applicants respectfully request allowance of claims 7-11, 15-18, and 21-25.

C. Claim Rejections

The Examiner rejected claim 2 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b). With this Amendment, Applicants have cancelled claim 2 without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter. As such, the rejection of claim 2 as being anticipated by Okawa is moot.

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 3, 4, 7, 9-13, 15, and 17-20 under 35 U.S.C. §103 over various combinations of references. With this Amendment, Applicants have cancelled claims 1, 3, 4, 12, 13, 19, and 20, without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter, and amended claims 7, 9, 10, 11, 15, and 17 to depend from allowed claim 5. Claim 18 remains dependent from claim 9. As such, the rejection of claims 1, 3, 4, 7, 9-13, 15, 17-20 under 35 U.S.C. §103 over various combinations of references is moot.

D. New Claims

With this amendment Applicants have added claims 21-25. These claims are supported by the specification and figures. Consideration and allowance of these claims is respectfully requested.

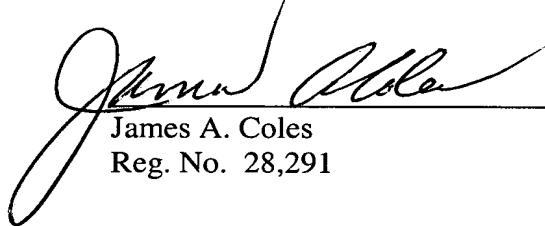
E. Final Remarks

Claims 5, 7-11, 15-18, and 21-25 are believed to be in condition for allowance. Such allowance is respectfully requested.

If necessary, please consider this a Petition for Extension of Time to effect a timely response. Please charge any additional fees or credits to the account of Bose McKinney & Evans, LLP Deposit Account No. 02-3223. In the event that there are any questions related to these amendments or to the application in general, the undersigned would appreciate the opportunity to address those questions directly in a telephone interview to expedite the prosecution of this application for all concerned.

Respectfully submitted,

BOSE McKINNEY & EVANS LLP

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James A. Coles', is written over a horizontal line.

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